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NEW POEM OF SAPPHO.

Manuscript Discovered in Egypt.

The directors of the Egypt Exploration Fund, Dr. B. P. Grenfell and Mr. A. S. Hunt, have discovered a new poem by Sappho at Oxyrhynchus, in Egypt.

While the restoration of the damaged text is in places quite easy, there are several passages where the words supplied are purely conjectural, particularly in the last stanza. The poem is undoubtedly not quite complete.

Mr. Edmunds, of Cambridge, translates:

"The fairest thing in all this world
some say is a host of horsemen, and
some a host of foot, and some again a
navy of ships, but to me 'tis the heart's
holoved. And 'tis easy to make this
understood by any. When Helen, sur-
veyed much mortal beauty, she chose
for best the destroyer of all the honour
of Troy, and thought not so much
either of child or parent dear, but
was led astray by Love to bestow her
heart afar: for woman is ever to be
lured when she thinks lightly of what
is near and dear. Even so you, O-day,
my Anactoria, remember not, it seems,
when she is with you, one of whom I
would rather the sweet sound of her
footfall and the sight of the bright-
ness of her bosoming face than all the
chariots and armoured footmen of
Lydia: I (know that in this world man
cannot have the best; yet to pray for
a where in what was once shared is
better than to forget it."

Perhaps no writer of antiquity, whose
works have come down to us so frag-
mentarily, is so well known to us, at
any rate by name, as Sappho, the
seventh-century poetess of Lesbos. Until
recently she was represented by only two
short but exquisite odes, together with
a few fragments which had been pre-
served by other writers; but these pieces,
one of which is also known in its Latin
version by Catullus, were perhaps enough
to justify in modern eyes the poetess's
great reputation in the ancient world.
Since, however, Egypt, the classical
hunting-ground for lost texts, began
during the present generation to reveal
its treasures, a good many fresh fragments
of Sappho have been recovered, and her
name, as well as that of her contem-
poraries, now rests on a firmer basis.
It would be unnecessary to quote the
many tributes which English poets have
paid to "burning Sappho"; but one may
perhaps recall the lines of Mrs. Brow-
ning, for they have a biographical sig-
nificance:

Sappho, with this simile
Of often hair on oiled brows,
O poet-woman! none forgives
The leap, attaining the repose.

The leap, of course, is an allusion
to the legendary feat of her leaping, after
her vain pursuit of Phaon, who disdained
her, into the sea off the Leucadian
promontory; but the story does not tell
us whether she died of the adventure
or not. But whatever legend has to re-
late of her, it is certain that as Lesbos
she was at the head of a great school
of writers in the heyday of Aeolic poetry,
and her reputation as "the poetess"
rivalled that of Homer as "the poet."
Of her contemporaries we have, unfor-
tunately, even fewer fragments than of
her own poems; but in this last Egyp-
tian discovery some fresh pieces have
also come to light of Alcæus, who ad-
dressed her, as we know already, in an
ode and was answered by her in another.

The manuscript in which the poem
appears has the following subscrip-
tion: "The First Book of the Lyrics of
Sappho, 1282 Lines, on the list of the
44 fragments from which hereby a dozen
stanzas, besides those quoted above, can
be restored."

Many other manuscripts, including
fragments of Alcæus and the remains
of an extraordinary gayer, have been
discovered.

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July 9	ASSAYE	July 14	18	MEDINIA	Aug. 16	Aug. 21
July 23	DRIVANHA	July 28	18	ANGOLIA	Aug. 29	Sept. 4
Aug. 6	DELTA	Aug. 11	15	15	Sept. 12	Sept. 18
Aug. 20	HIMALAYA	Aug. 24	29	MALW.	Sept. 26	Oct. 2
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					Friday	Thursday
Sept. 17	ASSAYE	Sept. 22	26	MAENORRA	Oct. 23	Oct. 29
Oct. 1	DEVANHA	Oct. 6	10	MOULATAN	Nov. 6	Nov. 12

